

# A Guide to District Support for School Planning

## Summer 2023

School planning can be a first step to successful improvement work in schools. The extent to which districts support the school planning process is a district level decision. However, districts do have the responsibility each year of reviewing, providing feedback, and approving school level plans. Below is a list of strategies districts might use to support the school planning process.

### Step 1: Set Expectations with School Leaders and Approvers

As districts plan for supporting school planning, leaders should consider the specific expectations they want to establish as a district, as well as how they will communicate those expectations. This document provides some considerations for setting district expectations for school planning.

#### ***Timeline***

How will the district pace planning activities throughout the full planning window to provide adequate time for school leaders to develop quality plans?

When should the team start working on the plan? Who should they engage in its creation?

When will the first draft need to be submitted?

When will they receive the first round of feedback?

What trainings or supports will be provided and when?

What are the district's expectations for revisions or monitoring throughout the year?

Review sample support timelines [here](#).

#### ***Quality***

How will the district define a quality plan?

What tools or resources will the district provide to planners and reviewers to promote quality?

Look at the school planning rubric [here](#).

How might the district adapt this rubric to match the district's expectations for school level plans?

What specific expectations does the district have for school plans?

- What connections to district LEA plan are expected?
- What connections or alignment to LEA goals and strategies is expected?
- What connections to certain initiatives or legislation is expected? (e.g. Reading 360, Summer programming, high dosage low ratio tutoring, Math HQIM implementation)
- Are there any additional expectations for any schools identified as ATSI/TSI/Priority? How will the district ensure that these schools are meeting the needs of the student groups for which they have been identified?

## Step 2: Provide Training and Support to School Leaders

One way districts can support quality planning is by providing school leaders and approvers with training and support during the planning process. Below are some resources district leaders can use to provide training on improvement planning to school leaders.

- [Continuous Improvement Planning for School Leaders](#): This slide deck can be customized by district leaders to include the expectations for quality that its leadership team has defined in order to support school leaders or the school planning team in creating a high-quality improvement plan. Additional tools have been linked throughout to support in:
  - [Data Review Template](#)
  - [Analyzing Data](#)
  - [Prioritizing Needs Activities](#)
  - [Aligning Goals and Strategies Tool](#)
  - [Action Steps Tool](#)

Another way districts can support quality school-level planning is by providing school leaders with front-end support throughout the planning window. Some considerations for support are as follows:

- Set aside one planned check-in for each school during the school planning window and set expectations for where the schools should be in the planning process at time of check-in. (ex. needs assessment and goals complete)
- Assign reviewers to specific schools and have them provide ongoing support throughout the school planning window.
- Prioritize support for schools with new leaders and schedule two check-ins during the planning window with set expectations for where schools should be in the planning process at each check-in.

Set a date prior to the official school due date to have school plans ready but not submitted.

Reviewers could conduct a pre-review with feedback for all schools or a set of prioritized schools.

## Step 3: Provide Training and Support to Plan Approvers

Another way districts can support quality planning is by providing plan approvers with training and support during the planning and review process. Below are some guiding questions to consider when planning for review and a resource that can be used to set expectations and norming for review of school plans.

### **Reviewers**

Who will review the plans?

What should feedback look and sound like? What tools should reviewers use for providing feedback?

When should the first round of feedback be complete?

When should the final reviews be complete?

### ***Approval***

Who will approve the final plans?

What is the process for submitting for final approval?

When should plans be submitted for final approval?

[Preparing to Support and Give Feedback on School Plans](#): This slide deck can be customized by district leaders to include the expectations for quality that its leadership team has defined in order to support reviewers in providing quality feedback.

## **Step 4: Establish Routine Check-ins and Monitoring of the School Plans**

School improvement plans are only as helpful as they are living and breathing documents that guide the work and reflection of school leaders. Districts may consider implementing check-in structures and protocols that focus on progress towards the school plan. Below are some resources district leaders can use to establish routine check-ins, as well as some protocols they might use to facilitate those meetings.

[Schedule Template and Roles/Responsibilities for Check-in Meetings](#): This resource can be adapted and used to create a schedule and expectation for check-ins on school plans throughout a school year. It can help you define who should be included and the role for each person in attendance.

[After Action Review Protocol](#): This protocol can be used to facilitate check-in meetings on progress towards school level goals.

[District Level Reflection Protocol](#): This protocol can be used by district leaders to reflect on the check-in meetings and progress of schools to determine next steps for district level support or intervention.